

T H E

REHEARSAL.

1. The Calvinistical Scheme of Predestination is Groundless, and Useless.
2. Our 39 Articles Vindicated as to Free-Will and Predestination.
3. How some of our Divines became Infected with this Calvinism.
4. Arch-Bishop Laud Vindicated against Dr. Edwards &c.
5. The Doctor's Unjust Charge of Pelagianism against Us.
6. The terrible Use he makes of the Union.
7. And gives fair Warning to the Church of England.

SATURDAY, August 16. 1707.

(1.) Country-man. **I** Hope, Master, That what you have said of Predestination will Satisfy others as well as it has me. First, that the whole Dispute, as manag'd by the Calvinists, is all built upon a wrong Foundation, even by their own Confession, in Arguing Strictly from words *ad Captum*, and which they Confess to be so; And will not suffer the like to be done in any other Case. Therefore that they ought to stop their Disputes upon this Point, till they can find Proper words to speak by, if they will speak Properly of God. And these Disputes ought to Cease for a Second Reason you have given, which is, That they are Useless, because whatever the Secret Decrees of God may be suppos'd to be, yet that they cannot go against or Invalidate His Will Declar'd Openly in the Holy Scriptures, for that wou'd be to Contradict Himself. Therefore that we may Work in Hope and Chearfully Apply our selves to the Performing of what He has Commanded Us; with full Trust and Assurance in what He has Promis'd, without Perplexing and Intangling our selves in these Disputes about His Secret Decrees; for they must go according to His Reveal'd Will. In this we are Sure, and therefore these Disputes are at the Best Useless to Us; But of most Pernicious Consequence when taken by the Wrong Handle, as you have fully shew'd.

(2.) But there is one thing wherein Dr. Edwards and the Predestinarians do very much Boast; they say that their Doctrin is agreeable to our 39 Articles; and therefore that our Clergy have Apostatiz'd (as Dr. Edwards words it) from the Doctrin of the Church of England: And that the Dis-

senters are the true Church of England, because they hold Predestination, and are against Free-Will, as they say our Articles likewise speak. Now tho' this be no Argument as to the Doctrin it self, yet to those of the Church of England it is of very great Consequence, as well to Vindicate the Church of England, as to stop the Mouths of the Dissenters, which are all open upon Us on this account.

Rehearsal. The tenth Article is of Free-will. Which is not at all there Deny'd, but rather suppos'd and Asserted. But it supposes the Concurrrence of the Grace of God by Christ to be Necessary to Incline and Guide our Will, and to Work with Us, When we have that good Will. Which is exactly Agreeable to what I have said before of Grace and our Working with it, in my Num. 232.

The 17th Article is of Predestination. And keeps to the Scripture-Phrase of God's Ordaining before the World began, of Calling whom He Fore-knew, Justifying, Sanctifying them &c. Which is to be Understood in the same and no other sense than as these words are us'd in Holy Scripture, which all Agree to be *ad Captum*, as we have Discours'd before. And these Expressions of Scripture are, according to our Capacities and Manner of Speaking, as this Article says, full of Sweet, Pleasant, and Unspeakable Comfort to Godly Persons. But then this Article Checks the Christies of this Dispute (which is what I have been Blaming) and says, For Curious and Carnal persons lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their Eyes the Sentence of God's Predestination, is a Most Dangerous Downfal, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into Desperation, or into Wretchedness of most Unclean Living, no less Pernicious than Desperation.

Country-m.

Country-m. This is so Exactly what you have said, that yours is but a Comment upon this.

Rehears. Then the Article ends thus, *Furthermore, we must receive God's Promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: And in our Doings, that Will of God is to be follow'd, which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.*

Country-m. This is Just as you have Concluded, That we may safely Trust in God's Promises, and Perform our Duty cheerfully which he has Commanded in holy Scripture, without Perplexing our selves about His Secret Decrees.

Therefore instead of these Articles being against you, or you against them, you have perfectly follow'd them in your Argument, and Explain'd them.

Rehears. Observe further, That there is not a word of Reprobation in this 17th Article of Predestination, nothing of God's having Fore-Decreed any to Misery, but it speaks only of those whom He has Elected to Salvation. So that the Rigid Calvinists against whom we have been Disputing can find no Colour or Umbrage in their Favour from this Article.

Therefore whatever the opinion of particular Men might have been, this cannot be Charg'd upon the Church of England.

(3.) There was a time when some of our Divines ran in too much with the Calvinists. In the Marian Persecution many fled to Geneva and those Parts. And the Joint Cause against Popery, together with the Smart of their own Persecution, inclin'd them to all the favourable Opinion they could have of their Friends, who gave them Shelter. By this means some were Tinctur'd with these Rigid Notions of Predestination. And when they Return'd to England in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, their Reputation made this Doctrin go down more Easily with some People.

(4.) But our English Cyprian, the Great Arch-Bishop Laud, let himself to stop the Torrent of this Infection, and when he was Chancellor of Oxford, he turn'd the Bent of their Studies from these Modern Polemicks, and Reading the Dutch and German Systems of Divinity, to Learn downwards, and from the first Beginning of Christianity to Acquaint themselves with the Fathers in the several Ages to our times: Whereby they wou'd be better able to Judge of the Novel Disputes of the Remonstrants, Anti-Remonstrants, Supra and Sub-Lapsarians, &c. which then Tormented the Reformation in Germany and Holland; and wherein we likewise took Part. And

that famous University (together with her Sister of Cambridge, which took the same Method) Reap to this Day the Benefit of these Pious Instructions of her Learned Chancellor, which has given them that Deserved Reputation all over Europe for their Great Knowledge and Exactness in Antiquity, and the Primitive Doctrin and Discipline of the Church; and teaching us to Derive our Faith from its Fountain and Original, and to go Higher up than either Luther or Calvin. For want of which the Church of Rome has Gain'd great Advantage against her less Learned Opposers.

For this Cause Dr. Edwards has thought fit to fall foul upon Arch-Bishop Laud, as the Corrupter of our Doctrin. But we Bless his Memory as the Restorer of it.

(5.) The Doctor Charges him and us with bringing in what he calls Pelagianism, and Arminianism. But he is too Learned not to know this to be a Mistake. For tho' we Assert Free-Will, yet we teach the Concurrence and even Necessity of Grace, to Enable us to bring forth Fruit unto God, as is before Explain'd, Num. 232.

(6.) *Country-m.* You have made it Plain even to me. And now I am Frighted to think, That any Divine of the Church of England shou'd make such an use of the Union of the two Kingdoms, and to Propose it in Print, as to join with the Rigid Calvinists in Scotland and Holland, and our own Dissenters at Home, against the Church of England, which he calls Apostat; and hopes, with this Foreign and Domestick Aid, to bring Us all back again to the Rigid and most Abhorrent Calvinism of Predestination; to throw Men into Despair, and Wretchedness of most Unclean Living, as our Article of Predestination Speaks.

(7.) But I hope this will give sufficient Warning to those of our Clergy who yet remain Firm to the Church, that they may in time Ward this Blow which is so Publickly Threatn'd, and already Attempted!

ADVERTISEMENT S.

A Parallel between the Faith and Doctrin of the present Quakers, and that of the Chief Hereticks in all Ages of the Church. And also a Parallel between Quakerism and Popery.

The Bishop of Salisbury's proper defence, from a Speech cry'd about the streets in his Name, and said to have been spoken by him in the House of Lords upon the Bill against Occasional Conformity.

AN Answer to some Queries, concerning Schism, Toleration, &c. In a Letter to a Friend.